

CLAIMS

[1] A mobile information terminal comprises a display device, a plurality of operation keys disposed on a surface opposite to a surface on which the display surface of said display device is disposed, finger position detecting mechanisms for detecting that a finger of an operator is placed on each of said operation keys, and a control section to which signals from said operation keys and said finger position detecting mechanisms are entered and which can control the operation of said display device, wherein said control section executes a processing operation to cause said display device to display an image showing the arrangement of said operation keys and to change an icon which is included in the image of said arranged operation keys and which corresponds to one of said operation keys on which the operator placed his/her finger when the control section determines, according to an input signal from said finger position detecting mechanisms, that the finger of the operator is placed on said one of operation keys.

[2] The mobile information terminal according to claim 1, wherein each of said finger position detecting mechanisms includes a half-depressing sensor for detecting that each of said operation keys is half-depressed and/or includes a touch sensor for detecting that the finger of the operator touches each of said operation keys.

[3] The mobile information terminal according to claim 1 or 2, wherein executing the processing operation to change the icon that corresponds to one of said operation keys on which the finger of the operator is placed, is

executed by changing at least one of a display color, a display figure, a
5 display brightness, and a flickering pattern in the displayed icon.

[4] The mobile information terminal according to any one of claims 1 to 3,
wherein said control section executes a processing operation to start or stop
a predetermined program stored in advance when said control section
determines, according to a signal from said finger position detecting
5 mechanisms, that the finger of the operator is placed on a predetermined key
of said operation keys, or when said control section determines, according to
a signal from said finger position detecting mechanisms, that the finger of the
operator is sequentially placed on some of said operation keys in a
predetermined order.

[5] The mobile information terminal according to claim 4, wherein at least
one processing operation to display a predetermined image on said display
device or to stop the display, to display predetermined selection information
on said display device, to turn the light of an illuminator on or off or to cause
5 the illuminator to flicker, to generate or to halt a vibration of a predetermined
pattern, to generate or stop a sound having a predetermined pattern, to
connect the mobile information terminal to another information processing
apparatus, to which the mobile information terminal can be connected
through a network, or to disconnect the connection, is executed by starting or
10 by stopping said predetermined program.

[6] The mobile information terminal according to any one of claims 1 to 5,
further comprises a gravity sensor for detecting whether gravity is applied in

a direction from a side of said display surface of said display device to the opposite side or whether gravity is applied in the opposite direction,

- 5 wherein said control section executes a processing operation to change the assignment of key codes to said operation keys, in response to an input signal from said gravity sensor.

[7] A mobile information terminal comprises a display device, a plurality of operation keys disposed on a surface opposite to a surface on which the display surface of said display device is disposed, a gravity sensor for detecting whether gravity is applied in a direction from the side of said

5 display surface of said display device to the opposite side, or whether gravity is applied in the opposite direction, and a control section to which signals from said operation keys and said gravity sensor are entered and which can control the operation of said display device,

- wherein said control section executes a processing operation to cause said
- 10 display device to display an image showing the arrangement of said operation keys and a processing operation to change the assignment of key codes to said operation keys in response to an input signal from said gravity sensor.

[8] The mobile information terminal according to claim 6 or 7, wherein the arrangement of the key codes assigned to said operation keys when gravity is applied in a direction from the side of the display surface of said display device to the opposite side is a mirror image of the arrangement of the key

5 codes assigned to said operation keys when gravity is applied in a direction from the side opposite to the side of the display surface of said display

device to the side of the display surface.